

Measurable Skill Gains Guide for State VR Agencies

State Vocational Rehabilitation Agencies (SVRAs) are continuing robust efforts to implement the required changes to the Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) program authorized under Title I of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended by WIOA Title IV and administered by the U.S. Department of Education (ED). The purpose of this WINTAC guide is to provide technical assistance to SVRAs to understand the requirements of the Measurable Skill Gains Indicator, and to develop policies and procedures using Federal joint guidance.

Federal Joint Guidance

[RSA-TAC-17-01](#) Performance Accountability Guidance for Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) Title I, Title II, Title III and Title IV Core Programs: The purpose of this guidance is to provide sub-regulatory guidance on the requirements set forth in WIOA, related to the implementation and operation of the performance accountability system under section 116 of WIOA and the VR program's implementing regulations in 34 CFR part 361 subpart E.

Measurable Skill Gains (MSG) is the percentage of participants who, during a program year, are in an education or training program that leads to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment and who are achieving documented academic, technical, occupational, or other forms of progress, towards such a credential or employment (see 34 CFR §361.155(a)(1)(v)).

The MSG indicator is used to measure interim progress of participants who are enrolled in education or training services for a specified reporting period. Therefore, it is not an exit-based measure. Instead, it is intended to capture important progressions through pathways that offer different services based on program purposes and participant needs.

The MSG indicator reflects the vision for a workforce system that serves a diverse set of individuals with a range of services tailored to individual needs and goals.

With thousands of education and training programs across the country, how do SVRAs determine whether or not MSG meets the definition of achieving academic, technical, occupational or other forms of progress and can be documented as one of the five types of MSGs?

Similar to the Credential Attainment Indicator, ED and the U.S. Department of Labor do not specify which skill gains count toward the MSG indicator. SVRAs must use the Federal joint guidance to define MSGs for education and training programs in their State. Using the Federal joint guidance, the WINTAC has outlined questions an SVRA would need to answer, provided some MSG examples and highlighted other considerations.










Five Types of Measurable Skill Gains

Depending upon the type of education or training program in which a participant is enrolled, documented progress is defined as one of the following:

1. **Documented achievement of at least one educational functioning level (EFL)** of a participant who is receiving instruction below the postsecondary education level;
2. **Documented attainment of a secondary school diploma or its recognized equivalent;**
3. **Secondary or postsecondary transcript or report card** for a sufficient number of credit hours that shows a participant is meeting the State unit's academic standards;
4. **Satisfactory or better progress report towards established milestones**, such as completion of On-the-Job-Training (OJT) or completion of one year of an apprenticeship program or similar milestones, from an employer or training provider who is providing training; or
5. **Successful passage of an exam** that is required for a particular occupation or progress in attaining technical or occupational skills as evidenced by trade-related benchmarks, such as knowledge-based exams.

Don't Forget!

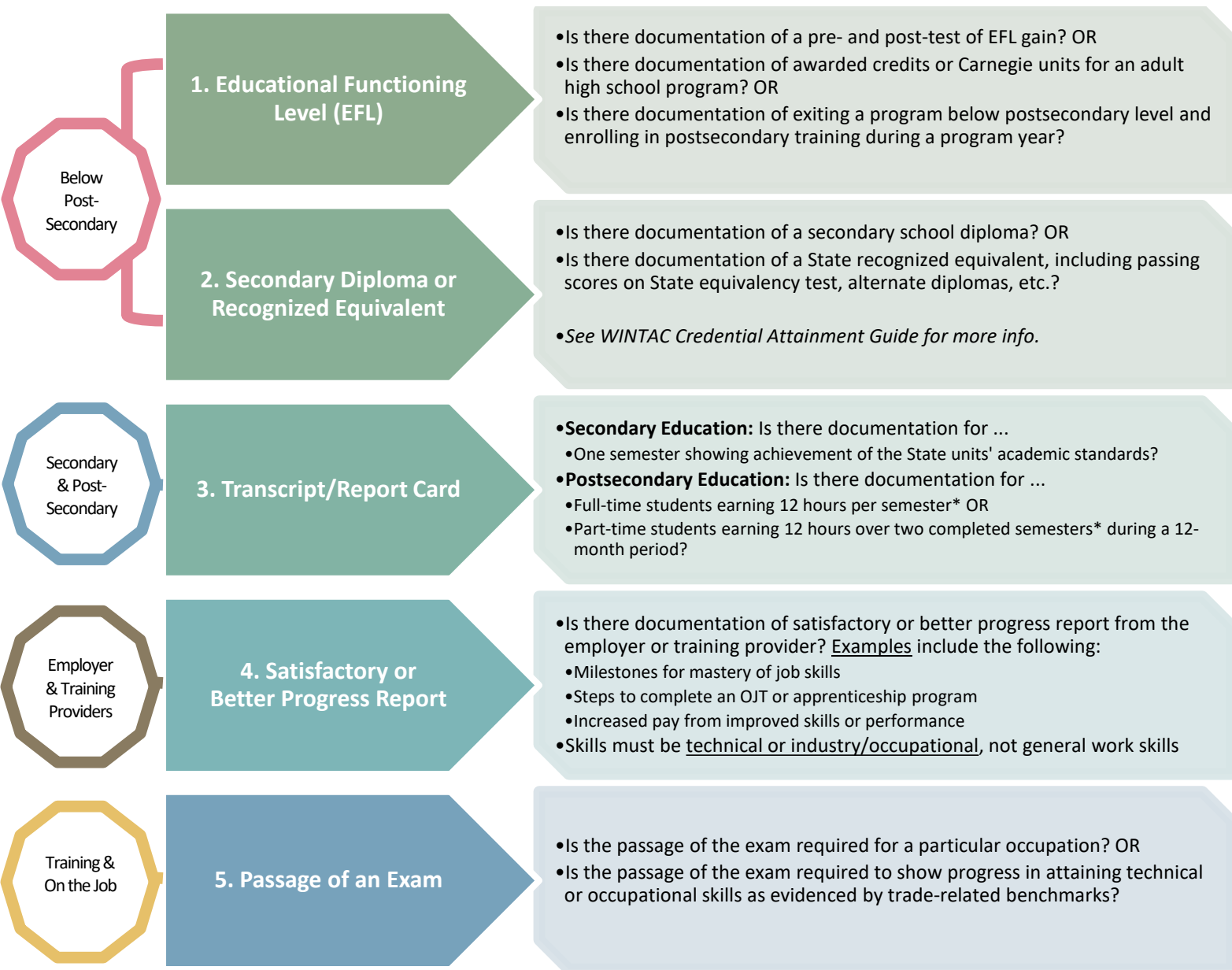
-  **Reporting MSGs:** SVRAs should report all MSGs achieved by participants in a program year, although only one gain is required per participation period, per program year to count towards performance accountability.
-  **Education and Training Programs on the IPE:** If a VR program participant is enrolled in an education or training program that leads to a recognized secondary or postsecondary credential or employment, this program should be identified on the individual's IPE so that it can be included in the MSG indicator.
-  **OJT and Customized Employment:** Unlike the Credential Attainment Indicator, OJTs and Customized Employment are included in the MSG Indicator because they lead to employment.
-  **SVRAs Need to Create Their Own Policies and Procedures:** VR Counselors need to understand their SVRAs process in determining allowable MSGs and how to maintain supporting documentation for the MSG earned.
-  **Aligning with WIOA Core Programs:** Though it is not required to align all WIOA policies, SVRAs may benefit from partnering with other WIOA core programs (Title III is not included in MSG) on policies/procedures and supporting documentation requirements for the MSG Indicator. For example, the Title II Adult Education and Family Literacy Act (AEFLA) program is the expert in EFLs and may assist SVRAs in developing policies and procedures.
-  **Pre-Employment Transition Services:** Pre-employment transition services do not generally align with MSGs. Pre-employment transition services provide general career exploration activities to students with disabilities while MSGs document interim progress of participants who are enrolled in education or training programs that lead to a recognized postsecondary credential or employment.
-  **MSG is Not Exit-Based:** MSGs are earned and reported on open cases, during the quarter and program year they are achieved.



Measurable Skill Gains Checklist

SVRAs may use the following checklist as a guide to determine if a specific gain meets the definition of MSG, as defined by WIOA. This checklist is intended for use only as a guide, using the RSA TAC-17-01. SVRAs are encouraged to create state-specific guidance that, when possible, aligns with the other State agencies implementing WIOA core programs.

Answering “YES” to these questions, per MSG type, provides reasonable assurance that the MSG can be documented and included in the Measurable Skill Gains indicator.



**SVRAs should develop policies suitable for applicable academic system equivalencies.*



Data Validation

SVRAs must follow **Guidance for Validating Jointly Required Performance Data Submitted under the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)**, outlined in [TAC-19-01](#), as they maintain supporting documentation for the MSGs that VR program participants may earn.

Specific Examples

SVRAs may use the following examples for training, comparing programs and determining other types of MSGs.

MSG Examples that DO Count



Educational Functioning Level (EFL)

- Skill gains, credits/Carnegie units related to reading, writing, math, English proficiency
- **National reporting System for Adult Education** (Resource for Assessments approved in the Federal Register) www.nrsweb.org (e.g., CASA, BEST, TABE/CLAS-E, GAIN, MAPT)



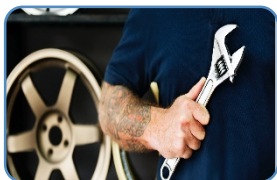
Secondary Diploma or Recognized Equivalent

- Secondary School Diploma or State recognized equivalent, including passing scores on State equivalency test, alternate diplomas, etc.
- See *WINTAC Credential Attainment Guide* for more information.



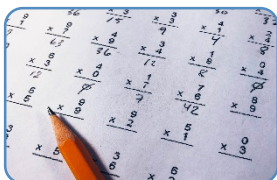
Secondary & Postsecondary Transcript or Report Card

- Transcript or Report Card from public secondary and postsecondary education programs
- Remedial training/coursework required for the completion of a training program or that are necessary in order to gain competitive integrated employment



Satisfactory or Better Progress Report

- Completion of an OJT and documented skills attained for the specific employment
- Yearly (or designated timeframe) progression in a registered apprenticeship program
- Documented milestones through a Customized Training program; mastering required job skills, increased pay or performance resulting from newly acquired skills (e.g., CVS, Walgreens, Sephora)



Passage of an Exam

- Exam in a Registered Apprenticeship, Employer Required Knowledge-Based Exam, Industry or Occupational Competency Assessments (e.g., HVAC, Accounting Specialist, Carpenter, Plumbing)
- Completion Test Necessary to Obtain a Credential (e.g., NCLEX, CPA, CRCC, Barber/Cosmetology, Pharmacy Tech Certification, Real Estate Broker)



Specific Examples (continued)

SVRAs may use the following examples for training, comparing programs and determining other types of MSGs.

MSG Examples that DO NOT Count



Educational Functioning Level (EFL)

- Pre- and Post-tests demonstrating mastery of orientation and mobility skills
- Yearly progression in secondary education
- General skills gained as part of the Individualized Plan for Employment (IPE) for activities that do not relate to training and education



Secondary Diploma or Recognized Equivalent

- Special Education Certificate of Completion
- Other Certificate/diplomas of completion or attendance, not credit bearing or consistent with state academic standards



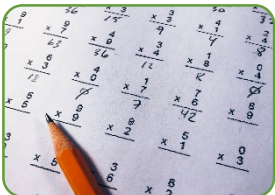
Secondary/Postsecondary Transcript/Report Card

- Yearly progression in Special Education while working toward a Certificate of Completion
- Yearly or semester progression in a non-credit bearing Comprehensive Transition Program



Satisfactory or Better Progress Report

- Transportation Skill Attainment (e.g., Mastering use of public transportation)
- Documented attainment of Microsoft Office skills in JAWS
- Skills attained through Pre-Employment Transition Services



Passage of an Exam

- Employer-specific testing (e.g., interest inventories and hiring assessments)
- Vocational Evaluation Assessments and Aptitude Tests

If it doesn't meet the definition a Credential, then it likely does not meet the definition of a Measurable Skill Gain; however, it's important to review these on a case-by-case basis using this checklist and Federal joint guidance.

